

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**National Park Service**  
**National Register of Historic Places Registration Form**

**1. Name of Property**

Historic Name: Bella Villa Apartments  
Other name/site number: NA  
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

**2. Location**

Street & number: 5506 Miller Avenue  
City or town: Dallas State: Texas County: Dallas  
Not for publication: ☐ Vicinity: ☐

**3. State/Federal Agency Certification**

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:  
☐ national ☐ statewide ☒ local

Applicable National Register Criteria: ☒ A ☐ B ☒ C ☐ D

Mark Wolfe  
Signature of certifying official / Title

State Historic Preservation Officer

Date

7/25/19

Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that the property is:

- ☐ entered in the National Register  
☐ determined eligible for the National Register  
☐ determined not eligible for the National Register.  
☐ removed from the National Register  
☐ other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

## 5. Classification

### Ownership of Property

|                                     |                  |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Private          |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Public - Local   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Public - State   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Public - Federal |

### Category of Property

|                                     |             |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | building(s) |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | district    |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | site        |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | structure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | object      |

### Number of Resources within Property

| Contributing | Noncontributing |            |
|--------------|-----------------|------------|
| 1            | 0               | buildings  |
| 0            | 0               | sites      |
| 0            | 0               | structures |
| 0            | 0               | objects    |
| 1            | 0               | total      |

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

## 6. Function or Use

**Historic Functions:** Domestic: multiple dwelling

**Current Functions:** Work in Progress

## 7. Description

**Architectural Classification:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Mediterranean Revival

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Stucco, wood, ceramic tile

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 7-6 through 7-8)

Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

|                                     |          |  |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>A</b> | Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>B</b> | Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>C</b> | Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction. |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | <b>D</b> | Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.  |

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Community Planning and Development, Architecture

**Period of Significance:** 1926

**Significant Dates:** 1926

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Young & Young (architects); Hockett, Royal G. (builder)

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 8-9 through 8-16)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 9-17 through 9-18)

### Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☒ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (*Part 1 Approved 10-6-17*)
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

### Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- ☐ Other state agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other -- Specify Repository:

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

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## 10. Geographical Data

**Acreeage of Property:** Less than 1 acre

**Coordinates** (either UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates)

### Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84:

1. Latitude: 32.821054° N, Longitude: -96.774392°W

**Verbal Boundary Description:** Vickery Place, Block 16/1929, Lots 1, 2 and 3; Dallas, Dallas County, Texas (Dallas Central Appraisal District) as shown on Map 5.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundary includes all property historically associated with the building.

## 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Jay Firsching, Senior Historic Preservation Specialist & Emily Simon, Preservation Specialist  
Organization: Architexas – Architecture, Planning and Historic Preservation  
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City or Town: Dallas State: Texas Zip Code: 75201  
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Date: November 27, 2018

## Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheet Map-19 through Map-21)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets Figure-22 through Figure-28)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheet Photo-29 through Photo-34)

Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photographs**

Bella Villa Apartments  
Dallas, Dallas County, Texas  
Photographer: Jay Firsching - Architexas  
5/12/2018

**Photograph 0001**

North elevation, looking south.

**Photograph 0002**

West elevation, looking east.

**Photograph 0003**

South elevation, looking northeast.

**Photograph 0004**

Southeast oblique, looking northwest.

**Photograph 0005**

East elevation, cornice, and window detail.

**Photograph 0006**

Detail of main entry on Miller Avenue.

**Photograph 0007**

First floor primary lobby stair, camera facing southeast.

**Photograph 0008**

First floor primary hallway, camera facing south.

**Photograph 0009**

First floor apartment, typical, camera facing southeast.

**Photograph 0010**

Third floor apartment, typical, camera facing south.

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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## Narrative Description

The 1926 Bella Villa Apartments, at 5506 Miller Avenue, is a three-story, stucco Mediterranean Revival style apartment building with a rectangular plan and a truncated hip roof in Dallas, Dallas County, Texas. The building is in the Vickery Place neighborhood, a residential subdivision originally platted in 1911, laid out in a rectilinear grid and characterized by historic-age four-square and bungalow single-family homes with uniform setbacks on 50-foot lots. Bella Villa Apartments is centered on a large, grassy corner lot. The frame structure is clad in stucco, and deep eaves support a Spanish red clay tile roof. The focus of the façade is the stylized portico entrance with classical details, like panelized pilasters, that support an entablature and balustrade. Wrought iron balconettes, rough stucco walls, and the articulated door surround evoke the architectural language of Mediterranean Revival style popular in the 1920s and 1930s. A cross-plan corridor divides the Bella Villa Apartments interior in four quadrants, and the hallways access 24 single bedroom and efficiency-sized units. The interior modestly reflects the building's style with original pecan wood floors, textured stucco walls, arched door openings, and wrought iron stair railing. Bella Villa Apartments retains a high degree of historical and architectural integrity.

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## Location and Setting

The Bella Villa Apartments at 5506 Miller Avenue is in the Vickery Place subdivision of Dallas. Vickery Place is an irregularly-shaped single-family residential neighborhood approximately five miles north of downtown. The neighborhood is less than one square mile in area and roughly bounded by Goodwin Avenue (north), Greenville Avenue (east), Melrose Avenue (south), and North Central Expressway/I-75 (west). Originally a streetcar suburb platted in 1911, Vickery Place retains its rectilinear street grid, uniform lot sizes and setbacks. Historic-age homes show a variety of styles—like Craftsman, Tudor Revival, Minimal Traditional—on tree-lined streets. A recent resurgence of home construction in the area has replaced some of its character-defining early 20<sup>th</sup> century residences with larger, modern houses.

Bella Villa Apartments is in the center of an approximately 1/3-acre lot at the corner of Miller and McMillan Avenues. An unusually-large property for the neighborhood, the site was once grounds for a public school. Broad grassy lawns are on the two street-facing facades of Bella Villa Apartments. A concrete driveway is on the eastern perimeter of the lot and leads to a parking lot at the rear of the building. Concrete walks lead from the street to entrances on the north and west.

## Exterior

The 1926 Bella Villa Apartments, at 5506 Miller Avenue, is a three-story, stucco over brick masonry Mediterranean Revival style apartment building with a rectangular plan; the first floor is approximately two feet below grade. **(Photo 2)** There is physical evidence that builders constructed the Bella Villa Apartments on the remains of a school building that burned down in the 1920s. The original concrete slab-on-grade basement floor of the school is intact but heavily trenched for piping under the existing ground floor structure which consists of wood beams and joists supported by blocking. The extent of the original school structure incorporated into the nominated building is not known, but some wood framing in Bella Villa Apartments exhibits charring that suggests salvageable materials were reused in its construction. Perimeter walls are of stucco over load-bearing brick masonry construction with interiors composed of wood frame construction. Historic windows are single, paired, and triple 6/6 wood-frame double-hung. Most windows are original to the building, however modern, vinyl frame replacements fill a majority of the ground level openings on each façade. The nominated building has a low-pitched truncated hipped-roof clad with Spanish red clay barrel tiles interspersed by random blue accent tiles. A wide, continuous wood beam on heavy wood brackets supports deep eaves with exposed wood rafter tails. Paired widely-spaced brackets are at each side of the primary entry and at the building corners. The eaves extend approximately 18 inches. Wrought iron balconettes, accented art glass windows, rough stucco walls, and the articulated door surround express the building's Mediterranean Revival influence.

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The **north (primary) façade** faces Miller Avenue. **(Photo 1)** The elevation lacks articulated bays and is asymmetrical with an articulated entryway that is slightly west of center. The dramatic entry is a cast stone stylized, engaged two-story-tall portico, with panelized pilasters that support a classical entablature. The frieze includes the centrally-placed words "Bella Villa" flanked by simple round medallions. **(Photo 6)** The projecting cornice above the frieze is dentilated and supports an engaged balustrade terminated by truncated pilasters. A 12-light transom is over the broad front door within the entry vestibule. The door frame and transom are of wood. The original doors are missing, and the opening infilled with a contemporary door, blue plastic side lights, and a surround of non-original Mexican tile. The cloth covered entry canopy is also contemporary. Above the entry feature at the third floor is a multi-light, round-arch window with a decorative iron balconette. This window has a stucco sill and six-inch-wide stucco trim band that projects from the wall approximately one-half inch.

The stucco façade is lacking in significant detail with a simple projecting belt course between the first and second floors. Fenestration on the primary elevation is paired or tripled sets of six-over-six, double-hung wood windows divided by wide center mullions. Cast stone window sills project slightly. Moving west from the entrance are three sets of vertically-stacked windows: the first stack are tripartite windows, the second is a single-pane casement window with yellow art glass, and the third are paired windows. Moving east from the entrance are a set of tripartite windows and two sets of paired windows. This asymmetrical arrangement is due to the offset placement of the primary entry. The top of the third-floor windows terminates at the soffit. Modern vinyl windows replaced original materials on the first floor but retain the historic fenestration.

The **west façade** faces McMillan Avenue and features a concrete walkway extending from McMillan to a single-entry wood door with round-arched top. **(Photo 2)** The door has applied metal straps mimicking hand wrought steel strap-hinges. A non-original black-fabric awning hangs over the door. Above the entry door on each floor is a six-over-six wood double-hung window. To the south of the entry door there are two vertical stacks of windows: the first stack is three six-over-six single wood double-hung windows with higher sills, and the second stack is three paired six-over-six wood double-hung windows at the southernmost corner. The arrangement repeats on the north side of the door, but with two stacks of the smaller windows and a single stack of the larger paired units at the northernmost corner.

The **south (rear) façade** is symmetrical with a centrally-placed entry door and a mirrored fenestration pattern. **(Photo 3-4)** As with the west façade, the entry door has a fabric awning and two six-over-six wood double-hung windows above the door that give natural light to the corridors. Flanking the central entry are three tripled six-over-six double-hung wood windows followed by two vertical arrangements of three paired six-over-six double-hung wood windows. The pattern is mirrored on the other side of the entry.

The **east façade** is symmetrical with a centrally-placed door at each level that serve an exterior steel fire escape **(Photo 5)**. The doors at each landing are more typical of the Craftsman style with a large lower panel and six, square upper lights. Below these lights is a projecting rectangular trim board supported by three block-shaped brackets. On either side of the doors is a vertical arrangement of three six-over-six double hung wood windows. These windows are smaller with higher sills than the primary fenestration. This is due to their placement at interior kitchens. Flanking these smaller windows are sets of paired windows matching those of the primary façade.

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## Interior

Bella Villa Apartments retain the historic interior layout. A cross-axial corridor divides the building into four quadrants, and the hallways access 24 efficiency and one-bedroom units over three floors (**Figure 1**). Wrought iron railing, heavily textured walls throughout the building, and arched cased openings in the units subtly convey the Mediterranean Revival stylistic influences of the exterior. While the interior retains most of its original design features, repairs and patching of the walls is apparent throughout. This is related largely to ongoing movement in the building caused by an inadequate foundation design. Interior walls were constructed directly on the old Vickery Place School basement floor rather than on proper structural footings. Structural shifting also caused chronic leaks in interior plumbing, compounding the deterioration issues. Plaster surfaces, particularly adjoining restrooms and kitchens are in a state of disrepair; the condition is most pronounced on lower floors.

The main entry hall from Miller Avenue has a set of mailboxes for tenants on the east wall, to the north, a short set of steps at the left side leads to the lower corridor, and at the right a with a wrought iron balustrade leads up to the second floor. The stairway is open with iron railings at each landing (**Photo 7**). Limited modifications in the lobby are the addition of a Spanish tile floor and contemporary mailboxes, but it is otherwise intact.

The floor plan is identical at each level with a wide north corridor leading to a centrally-placed and narrower crossing corridor. Two, quite narrow secondary corridors are located at the south and west sides of the building at each floor. Walls and ceilings are wood lath with heavily-textured plaster. Wood floors appear to be pecan or similar. Uneven floors, wall cracks and numerous patches further indicate foundation issues. In addition to the main stair and the fire escape, there are two secondary stairs in the building. One is in the west corridor between the second and third floors. The other is in the north corridor between the third floor and roof.

There are two sizes of apartments in the nominated building. Each floor has five studio units and three one-bedroom units; there are a total of 24 apartments. Studio apartments each open to a common room that comprises roughly 50% of the unit, while the other half contains a dining room, kitchen, dressing room, closet, and bath. There is a Murphy bed closet in these units, but the beds no longer remain. One-bedroom units feature an entry hall, bathroom, closet, and bedroom on one side with the kitchen, living, and dining spaces on the other. Apartments feature cased doorways with arched heads (**Photos 9-10**). The plaster walls are lightly textured and have wood trim. Doors are single panel with glass knobs. The numerous windows provide ample light to the interiors.

## Integrity

The Bella Villa Apartment Building retains excellent architectural and historic integrity as a distinctive 1920s apartment building in Vickery Place, a historic suburb in Dallas. It retains integrity of location and setting in a neighborhood characterized by its early 20<sup>th</sup> century design and single-family residences. Sweeping lawns on the north and west portions of the nominated property provide unobstructed views of Bella Villa Apartments. A contemporary parking lot and driveway support the function of the building to provide parking for the multiple families that rent apartments. Bella Villa Apartments retain integrity of design and workmanship as its Mediterranean Revival style is conveyed through the Spanish tile roof, stucco walls, wrought iron details, and cast stone classical portico. The excellent condition of the original materials reflects the workmanship of the construction and is notable in the crispness of detail remaining in the cast stone ornamentation. Modern windows and an exterior door replaced original materials, but a preponderance of the historic exterior building materials remain intact. Bella Villa Apartments also retains integrity of design as the historic interior floorplan is intact, and the layout conveys its association and feeling with apartment housing of the era. Although the poor structural foundation has threatened the condition of Bella Villa Apartments, a proposed certified rehabilitation of the building will ensure it will remain a viable, livable apartment house in Vickery Place.



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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## Statement of Significance

The 1926 Bella Villa Apartments building is a 3-story brick multi-family dwelling in Vickery Place, a historic suburb in Dallas, Texas. As the only housing of its type built in Vickory Place, Bella Villa Apartments provided tenants, many single professionals and newlyweds, affordable housing on the streetcar line in a desirable middle-class neighborhood. Designed by the architecture firm Young and Young, the building displays Mediterranean Revival influences, most evident in the detailing in the central entrance bay, and tiled roof with deep overhanging eaves. It is an excellent example of the early apartment buildings that developed in North Dallas in the 1920s as part of the suburbanization of the area following the streetcar lines, and during a city-wide housing boom. It is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development, demonstrating new trends in residential development and multi-family residential buildings at the time of its construction, and under Criterion C for Architecture as a good local example of a Mediterranean Revival style apartment building. The period of significance is 1926.

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## Early 20<sup>th</sup> Century Dallas Housing Development

In the late-1880s, Dallas real estate promotion was directly tied to the proliferation of streetcars that were introduced to the city in the boomtown years between the arrival of railroads in 1872-3 and the 1893 Depression. The new form of transportation allowed people to reside increasingly farther from the city center and developers platted suburbs on rural lands surrounding Dallas. East Dallas, initially an independent municipality from Dallas, was one of the first areas subdivided. By 1900, there were several new developments there: Peak's Suburban Addition, Junius Heights, Swiss Avenue, and the Belmont Addition.<sup>1</sup>

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Dallas became an industrial hub for major companies, like Ford, and institutions, like the Federal Reserve. Subsequently more people moved there, and as downtown industry became denser so too did areas around the central business district.<sup>2</sup> New residential areas were crucial to supporting Dallas' fast-growing population. In 1890, Dallas was the most-populated city in Texas, with 38,067 residents following the annexation of East Dallas.<sup>3</sup> Dallas was leading the world's inland cotton market and had a rising population (42,638) when a depression hit in 1893. Suburban development subsequently halted, particularly in East Dallas, and did not restart in earnest until after 1900. In 1910, the population reached 92,104, a 150% increase in 30 years, and within 10 years, new streetcar suburbs, like Vickery Place north of East Dallas, were established to house the city's ever-expanding citizenry.<sup>4</sup> Dallas leaders commissioned a city plan in 1908 to regulate the city's unchecked growth. Following the Kessler Plan, the city improved infrastructure, street paving and grading, instituted zoning, and consolidated rail lines that previously separated major areas of downtown. Despite municipal improvements and the opening of new land for real estate development, the city struggled at times to keep pace with housing construction.

The development of multi-family housing—apartments, long-term hotels, boarding houses, duplexes, lodging rooms—in Dallas began in earnest after World War I. This type of residence, however, was often the subject of social critique. In the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century, local boarding houses offered tenants a private room within a shared-living arrangement. Accommodations included a shared bath and some meals prepared by the operator.<sup>5</sup> Boarding houses were commonly

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<sup>1</sup> Daniel Hardy and Terri Myers, "Historic and Architectural Resources of East and South Dallas, Dallas County, Texas," National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form. Texas Historical Commission, Austin, 1995, 41-45.

<sup>2</sup> Hazel, Michael V and Jackie McElhaney, "Dallas, TX," Texas State Historical Association, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdd01>.

<sup>3</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, Jackie McElhaney and Michael V. Hazel, "Dallas, TX," accessed August 23, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdd01>.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Hugh Chisholm, ed., "Boarding-House," *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 4 (11th ed.). (Cambridge University Press, 1911), 95.

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single-family homes occupied and operated by the owner, although some purpose-built boarding houses existed in Dallas. Another housing type, the "furnished room" or "lodging house," offered the same accommodations as boarding houses without meals. Hotels offered long-term tenancy with furnished rooms, usually with private baths, and amenities like maid service and a common dining room.<sup>6</sup> At the time, it was acceptable and expected that single men, or travelling businessmen, live in these types of accommodations. Although women were often proprietors of boarding or lodging houses, there were negative associations against women tenants of those dwelling types. Coed boarding houses were widely-perceived as a danger to women who might meet "unseemly men," and some critics portrayed female-only boarding houses as brothels.<sup>7</sup>

Nevertheless, the Dallas City Directory provides evidence to the growing proliferation of these various residential housing types. In 1911, city directory lists approximately 85 boarding houses, 200 furnished rooms, and 25 hotels. Four years later, there were 120 boarding house listings, 300 furnished rooms, and 17 hotels. In 1916, the directory listed the Park Hotel, which was the city's first apartment hotel.<sup>8</sup> Unlike apartments houses, apartment hotels were long-term accommodations that offered amenities of a typical hotel including maid service, a lobby and dining room, but also provided residents with some level of independence in the form of private kitchens.

When the United States entered World War I in 1917, the federal government enacted restrictions that limited civilian construction projects across the country to focus American industry towards the war effort. Growing metropolises, like Dallas, halted new construction throughout the duration of WWI. By the end of 1919, Dallas leaders expected the end of those restrictions and much-needed building projects, particularly residential, could begin.<sup>9</sup> The post-war housing market, however, was not as optimistic as the city government hoped, and there was a severe housing shortage at the end of the decade.<sup>10</sup> Speculative builders were afraid of the fluctuating cost of materials, and financiers were wary of losing the value of their investments in the volatile market.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, lenders required from borrowers a down payment of at least

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<sup>6</sup> These concepts are clearly illustrated in Dallas city directories, advertisements, and on Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps. For example, the 1896 Evans & Worley City Directory for Dallas lists close to 200 boarding houses in the city, approximately 70% of which were operated by women. Cross-referencing these properties on Sanborn maps confirms that most were single family homes offering room and board. That same year the directory lists 58 furnished rooms and 25 hotels. It is worth noting that directory listings often include overlap between these various room types. For example, hotels sometimes may be found in the furnished-rooms listings, indicating that residents might rent for longer stays.

<sup>7</sup> Ruth Graham, "Boardinghouses: Where the City was Born". *The Boston Globe*, Jan 13, 2013.

As the construction of apartment and tenement buildings increased, so did discussions about their effects on civil society.<sup>8</sup> Whether discussing homes of the affluent or the working poor, many of the criticisms were the same. Opponents to multi-family dwellings held that such living arrangements lowered moral standards and destabilized the family unit. Proximity, intermingling, and shared accommodations, they said, promoted promiscuity, and smacked of communism. Apartments, lacking kitchens and domestic facilities, left women without purpose and the ability to express freedom of creativity in appointing the home. Without room to play (indoor or out), critics argued that multi-family dwellings stifled childhood development. The suburban single-family home, they argued, offered the best environment for the American family.

<sup>8</sup> Housing in Dallas avoided much of this controversy until after World War I. While growth was rapid after the railroad arrived in 1874, single-family housing kept pace with demand. Wide-open spaces, streetcar suburbanization, and later the automobile meant that the ever-expanding construction of single-family homes remained the norm. When the post-war housing crisis took hold, technological advances in electrification, communication, and sanitation improved the functionality and affordability of apartments. These advancements provided apartment dwellers the conveniences of single-family homes with in-unit baths, full kitchens, and individual (rather than communal) social areas. Critics continued to argue against the decency of multi-family residences, but fifty years of debate and progress in other major cities already proved that apartments could play a positive role in American domestic life.

<sup>8</sup> Constructed as the Majestic Hotel in 1904, it was renamed in 1907 and later converted to an apartment hotel.

<sup>9</sup> "Extensive Building Program is Planned," *Dallas Morning News*, Nov 17, 1919, 6.

<sup>10</sup> Charles A. Myers, "Housing Company Revived Building," *Dallas Morning News*, Nov 20, 1921, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

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fifty percent. Potential buyers, both WWI veterans and those attracted to Dallas' prosperous industrial economy, faced a competitive housing market, and many were not financially capable to buy a home.<sup>12</sup>

The *Dallas Morning News* announced in 1919 there was never more scarcity in the housing market with a deficit of both single-family homes and apartments. The problem was even associated with a loss of businesses, as owners relocated to areas where employee housing was more readily available.<sup>13</sup> The city's business community, recognizing the housing shortage as both a problem and an opportunity, fell into two groups. The first, led by the Dallas Chamber of Commerce, believed affordable single-family homes were the solution to the housing crisis. The second, represented by individual developers and architects, believed multi-family housing provided a quick solution to increase the volume of housing the city needed. Over the next decade both approaches played a critical role in solving the crisis and in reshaping the Dallas housing market.

In 1919, the Dallas Chamber of Commerce established the Dallas Housing Company, a house-building not-for-profit corporation, to construct single-family homes at a low cost with the hope of encouraging private development.<sup>14</sup> Its work promoted positive societal benefits to single-family homes, and as the company actively promoted that type of construction, the implication was that other living arrangements were undesirable. The Dallas Housing Company was remarkably successful and became the model for similar efforts in cities like Houston and Shreveport. By 1921, it was the most successful in the nation, having built 120 homes at an average price of \$4,741.95, for an average down payment \$654.50. Homes were sold at cost plus 8% interest on the loan.<sup>15</sup> In total \$600,00.00 worth of homes were constructed for \$150,000.00 in capital.<sup>16</sup>

Even with its success, the city's housing problem worsened. In addition to a shortage of housing, of 37,000 homes in the city only a third were owned while comparable cities boasted ownership levels of two-thirds ownership.<sup>17</sup> In the short term, as the housing crisis worsened, public notions of "acceptable" housing evolved as multi-family residential dwellings became more common. In 1919, census analysts predicted Dallas would soon approach 200,000 residents and identified the consequences of the housing shortage on Dallasites. Families lived garages and stored furniture in warehouses while homeowners took in boarders and divided larger homes into smaller units for multiple families.<sup>18</sup>

A few developers challenged the negative public perception that apartments were undesirable as they touted it as a solution to the city's housing shortage. In the summer of 1919, an article in the *Dallas Morning News* lamented the city's lack of apartment buildings. Its author encouraged investors to construct rows of apartments to meet the demand on a large-scale and argued that such development, already undertaken in other major cities, would modernize Dallas.<sup>19</sup> The following September, the *Dallas Morning News* highlighted developer C. P. Sites' apartment building project on a 300-foot lot at Bryan and Grigsby Streets.<sup>20</sup> Sites observed that it was a timely endeavor as apartments had been "thoroughly threshed out [in other cities] and the experimental stage has long since been past."<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, he noted that Dallas was far behind smaller cities, like Oklahoma City, in constructing apartments. Sites challenged prejudices against the development with information about demographics of apartment dwellers in the Midwest and East Coast. All classes of people, he said, desired to live in apartments, and the demand was so high they were being purchased from floorplans

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, 22 Jan. 1919, 12.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> "Many Homes Built by Company Here," *Dallas Morning News*, Jan 2, 1921, 12.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Robert R. Penn, "Dallas is Climbing toward 200,000 Mark," *Dallas Morning News*, Sep 27, 1919, 6.

<sup>19</sup> "Says Dallas Needs Row of Apartment Houses," *Dallas Morning News*, Mar 18, 1919, 9.

<sup>20</sup> "Acquires Site for Apartment Houses," *Dallas Morning News*, Aug 31, 1919, 10.

<sup>21</sup> "Urges Building of Apartment Houses," *Dallas Morning News*.

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months before the buildings were even begun.<sup>22</sup> Sites argued to the Chamber of Commerce that an organization or company to spur construction of apartments was necessary. He stressed that apartment houses had a bad reputation, but that modern design and architecture brought them in line with the comforts and accommodations of single-family homes, noting that, "only an apartment meets satisfactorily the changed conditions of modern metropolitan life."<sup>23</sup> The chamber was unmoved and continued with its efforts to promote single-family home construction, but apartment construction would soon be a major factor in easing of the housing shortage.

Small and large efforts at apartment construction soon began to take hold. In addition to C. P. Sites plans, Senator Robert L. Warren announced two major apartment projects. Warren's first project was a three-story, 24-apartment block at Cole and Lemmon Avenues designed by architects Orlopp & Orloop (Figures 6 & 7).<sup>24</sup> Architect Frank J. Woerner took a special interest in the design of efficiency apartments. When he sought out investors, however, he found they were unwilling to back a type of residence with which they were unfamiliar and considered unmarketable. He purchased a lot on Haskell Avenue, between Swiss and Gaston, and built the apartments himself (Figure 8). Woerner's success in marketing the efficiency units led developer J.E. Kenefick to seek the architect's assistance. Kenefick commissioned Woerner to design the 1923 Stoneleigh Apartment Hotel.<sup>25</sup>

As apartments quickly proved to be a desirable investment, new buildings sprang up across the city. By 1920, a dedicated listing in the Dallas City Directory showed 22 apartment buildings, a number that swelled over 100 by 1925. Duplexes and fourplexes, still visible across the city today, were also popular and offered owners the ability to occupy one unit while renting the others. In the older suburban areas of East Dallas and Oak Cliff, diverse apartment hotels—like the Stoneleigh and Melrose Courts, Guidera Court on Gaston Avenue, and numerous smaller apartment blocks—were constructed (Figures 9 & 10). Although many apartments from the period exist today, others were replaced in the 1950s by larger, more modern apartments.

Like many of the homes constructed during this period in Dallas, apartments tend to be similar in plan with the apartments arranged for function and efficiency, with ornamentation applied to provide variation in style. These applied styles reflect residential architecture of the period, like Tudor, Craftsman and Classical Revival (Figures 10-13). However, Mediterranean Revivalist themes were apparently among the most popular and include with brick or stucco exteriors, flat roofs with tiled hips, and cast stone ornamentation. In addition to appealing to the tastes of the time, this style presumably lent itself to these larger rectilinear forms. As noted in the National Register file for the apartments at 4928 Bryan (1928; NR 2005) in East Dallas, a 1995 study of the area stated:

Apartment buildings with two to ten units are numerous in East Dallas. These buildings initiated the third wave of development that changed residential neighborhoods to higher density, commercial uses from the 1920s to the 1960s. Typical apartment buildings are two-story, four-plex blocks of brick-veneer construction. Each unit has four to six rooms, including a bathroom and one or two bedrooms. A slightly projecting bay, or infrequently, an inset courtyard, distinguishes the entry. The brick or stucco buildings incorporate popular or Revival style motifs, which often determines the roof forms.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> "Sites Urges More Apartment Houses," *Dallas Morning News*, Oct 2, 1919, 8.

<sup>24</sup> "Two More Apartment Houses to be Built," *Dallas Morning News*, Nov 5, 1919, 13.

<sup>25</sup> National Register of Historic Places, Stoneleigh Hotel, Dallas County, Texas, National Register #07000989.

<sup>26</sup> Historic and Architectural Resources of East and South Dallas, Dallas County, Texas, F-53. 1995.

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**Vickery Place, Dallas, Texas**

Born of pastoral cotton fields in what was considered north Dallas at the time, the Works-Coleman Land Company platted the Vickery Place Addition in 1911 (Figure 5).<sup>27</sup> Vickery Place was established north of East Dallas, an area first subdivided in the late 19<sup>th</sup>-century. The Dallas Consolidated Streetcar Company operated lines of electric streetcars throughout East Dallas, and new developments were platted as the terminus to streetcars as interurban rail expanded northward. G.W. Works, a manager for the Dallas Streetcar Company, advertised Vickery Place on the back of streetcar tickets.<sup>28</sup>

Vickery Place was planned in the spirit of more upscale suburbs, like Muenger Place, that developed in the area in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Uniform lot sizes, deed restrictions, and infrastructure amenities assured future residents that Vickery Place would retain its middle-class residential character. Advertisements for Vickery Place, a suburb "Above the City," offered prospective residents large, terraced lots on a high plateau overlooking Dallas with easy, affordable terms marketed to white-collar, first-time home buyers. Advertisements for the suburb highlighted deed restrictions that limited construction to single-family homes, and its location on the Bryan (later Vickery) streetcar line, which bisected the addition on McMillan Avenue and terminated one block north of Miller Ave.<sup>29</sup>

Access to the streetcar and the inter-urban train east of the addition made Vickery Place an accessible, and desirable, neighborhood for homebuyers who worked in downtown Dallas or nearby cities. Property sales for single-family lots in the new suburb were immediate, and the *Dallas Morning News* reported in 1911 that 200, out of 500, lots were sold in one week.<sup>30</sup> Most homes built were Craftsman-style bungalows and American Foursquare, clad with wood siding or brick. Property sales slowed as Dallas entered a housing crisis following World War I, but ultimately the development proved successful. By 1921, more than 80% of the lots were improved, and several years later there were no empty properties in the suburb.<sup>31</sup>

Children who lived in Vickery Place initially attended the Vickery Place School on Goodwin Avenue. In 1917, neighbors raised funds to build a larger edifice, and an 80 x 60-foot, two-story brick building on three lots at McMillan and Miller Avenue (Figures 2-3).<sup>32</sup> However, Vickery Place found itself in need of a larger school within a few years of its construction. In 1924, the new Vickery Place School (almost four times larger than the McMillan and Miller campus) opened to area students at the southern edge of the subdivision.<sup>33</sup> The two-story brick building was unoccupied for two years because neighborhood property restrictions limited its function to school or residential use.

As demand for low-cost and temporary housing for Dallas' growing working class increased between 1915 and 1930, suburbs south of Vickery Places underwent re-development. East Dallas lacked zoning regulations that outlying areas like Vickery Place had instituted in deed restrictions. Apartment buildings and boarding houses proliferated the blocks around Gaston Avenue and Swiss Avenue near the streetcar lines. Whereas in earlier decades, middle-class and upper-class residential suburbs followed streetcars, in the 1920s proximity to mass transit became the impetus for commercial and multi-family residential re-development.<sup>34</sup> Thus, streets like Greenville and Peak Avenue, included institutional, commercial, and multi-family buildings.

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<sup>27</sup> "History of Vickery Place," <http://www.vickeryplace.com/architectural-styles/history-of/history-of-vickery-place>.

<sup>28</sup> Jon Caswell, ed., *A Guide to the Older Neighborhoods of Dallas* (Dallas, Historic Preservation League, Inc.: 1986) 38.

<sup>29</sup> Advertisement, *Dallas Morning News*, June 25, 1911; "Dallas Ry. Co's. Key & Guide to Dallas 1925,"

<https://dartdallas.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/1925streetcar-large.png>.

<sup>30</sup> "Sales at Vickery Place," *Dallas Morning News*, July 8, 1911.

<sup>31</sup> "Vickery Line Earned \$4,938.79 during 1921," *Dallas Morning News*, Mar 3, 1922, 7.

<sup>32</sup> "Vickery Place School to Open Tomorrow Morning," *Dallas Morning News*, Sept 16, 1917.

<sup>33</sup> "James B. Bonham Elementary," <http://www.vickeryplace.com/announcements/jamesbbonhamelementary>.

<sup>34</sup> Hardy and Meyer, 47.

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Vickery Place and new neighboring suburban additions restricted commercial and multi-family residential encroachment in the 1920s to nodes between the communities. The success of the middle-class suburbs north of East Dallas brought additional public and private development that improved the quality of life in Vickery Place. Pavement and tree planting programs through the 1920s improved residential streets.<sup>35</sup> The private Hockaday School for Girls moved to a large lot at the corner of Belmont and Greenville Avenues in 1919 and became a nationally-recognized institution by 1928.<sup>36</sup> Commercial buildings replaced houses along main streetcar lines. Greenville Avenue, for example, on the eastern edge of the development became a bustling commercial district that included the city's first suburban movie theater. Completed in 1928, the Arcadia boasted a 1,500-seat theater and retail shops.<sup>37</sup>

Other subdivisions surrounded Vickery Place: Belmont Addition to the east, Greenland Hills to the north and west, and Dallas proper situated to the south and southwest. An economic depression in the 1890s prevented the Belmont Addition from initial success; most of its lots lay empty until the 1910s. Thereafter, the area quickly grew as a highly-desired and rapidly-developed neighborhood with streetcar access via the Belmont Line that ran along Matilda Street. Neighborhood development paralleled that of Vickery Place with housing stock in the two neighborhoods appearing quite similar even today.

Greenland Hills, known as "M-Streets," developed with the intent of creating a high-quality and cohesive residential neighborhood. In 1923, the McNeny brothers bought, platted, and subdivided 98 acres of the Bennett farm to create the Greenland Hills subdivision. Although advertisements marketed its proximity to the Vickery streetcar line, the neighborhood was developed with the automobile in mind. This is exemplified in early Sanborn maps of the development where homes are shown with purpose-built garages for automobiles. The development had defined architectural and landscaping guidelines. With each lot, purchasers selected from several pre-prepared floorplans with each Tudor Revival style home customized to provide variation in appearance.<sup>38</sup>

During the apartment boom that began in the 1920s, there were limited opportunities to build this housing type in established subdivisions like Vickery Place. Deed restrictions in Vickery Place limited lot development to educational and residential use. It is not known if there was a restriction against apartment buildings, but duplexes existed in the neighborhood at the time Bella Villa Apartments were constructed. It is possible the size of lots restrained development of large apartment buildings. If so, then the vacancy of Vickery Place School in 1926, located on a large lot in an already-developed area of single family-homes, provided a rare opportunity for the suburb's first and only apartment building.

Apartments were not constructed in the original boundaries for Greenland Hills, although the Marquita Courts Apartments were built in that suburbs' second addition, circa 1930.<sup>39</sup> According to Sanborn maps and advertisements, the Bella Villa Apartments and the Marquita Court Apartments were the only multi-family dwelling units in the Vickery Place, Belmont and Greenland Hills areas well into the 1950s. Some suburbs, like Greenland Hills, actively opposed the multi-family housing type. Its advertisements in 1923 state: "Build your home in Greenland Hills, where you are protected from the encroachment of apartments, stores and garages."<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> "History of Vickery Place."

<sup>36</sup> The school relocated to north Dallas in the 1960s and the campus subsequently removed. Ibid

<sup>37</sup> The Theater was destroyed by fire in 2005. "Dent's to Build Suburban Theater," *Dallas Morning News*, March 22, 1927, 4; Belmont Addition Conservation District, <http://www.preservationdallas.org/resources/discover-dallas/belmont/>.

<sup>38</sup> History of Greenland Hills, [http://mstreets.org/history\\_ghna.asp](http://mstreets.org/history_ghna.asp); *Dallas Morning News*, Feb 17, 1924, 5.

<sup>39</sup> Located at 5743 Marquita Avenue. No current designations.

<sup>40</sup> *Dallas Morning News*, April 1, 1923, 5.

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### The Bella Villa Apartments

For several years, the old school building at Miller and McMillan Avenue sat vacant as options for its reuse were explored. The Texas National Guard proposed to purchase the site for an armory, as stated in the *Dallas Morning News*:

... to acquire the building on the southeast corner of Miller and McMillan avenues in Vickery Place and establish a modern armory if the consent of the property owners can be obtained. ... The building, a two-story brick, was formerly used for the Vickery School but has stood vacant since the completion of the new building some blocks away. The property is restricted to residence and school purposes, except with the consent of 75 per cent of the property owners on the avenue.<sup>41</sup>

Vickery Place residents ultimately denied the idea, and the Dallas Board of Education sold the property to Ridgell Keller for \$8,500. Shortly after the purchase, a fire ravaged the school.<sup>42</sup> Royal G. Hockett and Eugene L. Rolfs bought the damaged property in March 1926.<sup>43</sup> Hockett was something of a property flipper; he owned a construction company and invested in real estate in the fast-growing areas of Dallas. When he died in 1933, Hockett's self-composed obituary noted his accomplishment at building the Bella Villa out of the old schoolhouse as well as other real estate investments.<sup>44</sup> It appears that Bella Villa was the only property that Rolfs, a salesman for a national roofing company, and Hockett invested in together.

Hockett and Rolfs hired architects Young & Young to design the three-story brick apartment building.<sup>45</sup> Frederick R. Young with sons Frederick L. Young, and Clifton R. Young owned the South Texas-based firm. The limited information available about Young & Young shows they specialized in the design of tourist courts and hotels in South Texas and occasionally designed projects outside the region.<sup>46</sup> The design for Bella Villa Apartments was based on the rectangular footprint of the Vickery Place School, and the owners sought to re-use as much of the damaged property in the new construction. Hockett and Rolfs obtained a permit to build Bella Villa Apartments in July 1926 at a cost of \$60,000, and Hockett's construction company completed the project before the new year.<sup>47</sup>

The Bella Villa Apartments in Vickery Place gave a new class of young professional couples and individuals all the conveniences afforded to middle-class Dallasites. Residents lived in an established, "clean" suburb "above the city." It was located on the Vickery Place streetcar line one block south of the terminus, and three blocks west of the Belmont line, providing residents of the multi-family dwelling unit with convenient transportation. A typical early advertisement for its efficiency and one-bedroom units read, "Bella Villa Apartments. Beautifully furnished 3-room apartments. Frigidaire, mechanical ventilation. Bills paid."<sup>48</sup> According to the Dallas City Directory, in 1927 Bella Villa was occupied by 15 tenants. By 1929, only two units were vacant. Residents were primarily newlywed couples, unmarried men, and in a few cases single women. Wedding announcements with Bella Villa listed as the couple's first home are numerous. Throughout the Depression, wedding announcements continued to describe young couples making their home at the apartments, often after their honeymoon travels.<sup>49</sup> Tenant professions ranged from clerks to district sales managers to

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<sup>41</sup> "Infantrymen Plan Armory," *Dallas Morning News*, July 16, 1925, 13.

<sup>42</sup> Deed, Dallas County Deed Record Books, Book 1255, 81; "Apartment to Replace Old Vickery School," *Dallas Morning News*, May 8, 1926, 4.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, Book 1297, 355.

<sup>44</sup> "Former Newspaper Man Dies Leaving Own Death Write Up with Only Time to be Added," *Dallas Morning News*, May 8, 1933.

<sup>45</sup> "Current Building Activities," *Dallas Morning News*, May 2, 1926, 1.

<sup>46</sup> *Mexia Evening News*, July 4, 1921; "Hotel Sold at Weslaco," *Brownsville Herald*, May 16, 1926.

<sup>47</sup> "Apartment to Replace Old Vickery School," 4.

<sup>48</sup> "Advertisement," *Dallas Morning News*, June 30, 1928, 19.

<sup>49</sup> "Walter B. Moore and Miss Tomlin to Marry Sunday," *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 1, 1935, 2.

Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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business owners and a nurse.<sup>50</sup> The Bella Villa Apartments have remained in continuous use and a popular landmark in the surrounding community for over 90 years.

### Criterion C, Architecture

The Mediterranean Revival style Bella Villa, which translates from Italian as “Beautiful Villa,” was certainly meant to be evocative of a luxurious European residence or country estate. The Mediterranean Revival Style peaked in popularity in the 1920s and 1930s, combining design elements from the Italian Renaissance, Spanish Renaissance, Spanish Colonial, and Beaux-Arts styles. Popular largely in California and Florida, especially in resorts and hotels, the style was also commonly used for apartment buildings, commercial structures, and residences alike. Typically, rectangular in plan with multiple stories, apartments of the style feature stucco-clad often symmetrical facades with red-tile low-pitched roofs. Details usually include wrought iron balconies or balconettes, decorative door surrounds, and overhanging eaves with decorative modillions. The Bella Villa Apartments feature many of these characteristics and are a particularly good example of the application of the Mediterranean Revival style in apartment buildings in Dallas and is a unique style in Vickery Place.<sup>51</sup>

The Bella Villa is in many ways typical of the apartment buildings constructed during Dallas’ post war housing boom of the 1920s. Efficiency drove the design of floor plans, and subsequent apartment typically had four to six rooms with conveniences—kitchen, bath, dining, living, and bedrooms—typical of a single-family home. While often simple and even repetitive in form and plan, ornamental details that reflected the popular architectural revival styles of the day decorated apartment buildings and provided an aesthetic connection to surrounding residential areas. The Bella Villa is unusual, however, owing to its construction on the remains of a preexisting structure, the Vickery Place School. Characteristics of the school reflected in the design include the first floor being placed partially below grade, a rectilinear plan with broad street-facing primary façade, and a prominent presence on an unusually-large corner lot with wide lawns.

### Conclusion

The post-World War I housing crisis in Dallas saw the apartment building come into favor as a means to provide renters the comforts and respectability of a single-family home with the affordability of a multi-family dwelling. Bella Villa Apartments is representative of Dallas’ first apartment boom in the 1920s. Completed in 1926, it is the only 1920s-era apartment building constructed in the combined suburbs of Vickery Place, Belmont and Greenland Hills and one of only two constructed in the area until the 1950s. The building has remained in continuous operation since it was constructed, and most of the exterior and interior character-defining features remain intact as does the original floorplan. In its original location on a spacious lot and in the center of an intact residential area, the building retains strong integrity in the areas of location, setting, feeling, and association. While its condition has suffered in recent years, the building retains its integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Bella Villa Apartments is nominated for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development, as it demonstrated new trends in residential development and multi-family residential buildings at the time of its construction, and under Criterion C for Architecture as a good local example of a Mediterranean Revival style apartment building. The period of significance is 1926.

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<sup>50</sup> Dallas City Directories, dates vary.

<sup>51</sup> Rexford Newcomb, *Mediterranean Domestic Architecture for the United States*, (New York: Acanthus Press, 1999).



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"Advertisement," *Dallas Morning News*, June 30, 1928.

"Walter B. Moore and Miss Tomlin to Marry Sunday," *Dallas Morning News*, Sept. 1, 1935.

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<https://dartdallas.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/1925streetcar-large.png>

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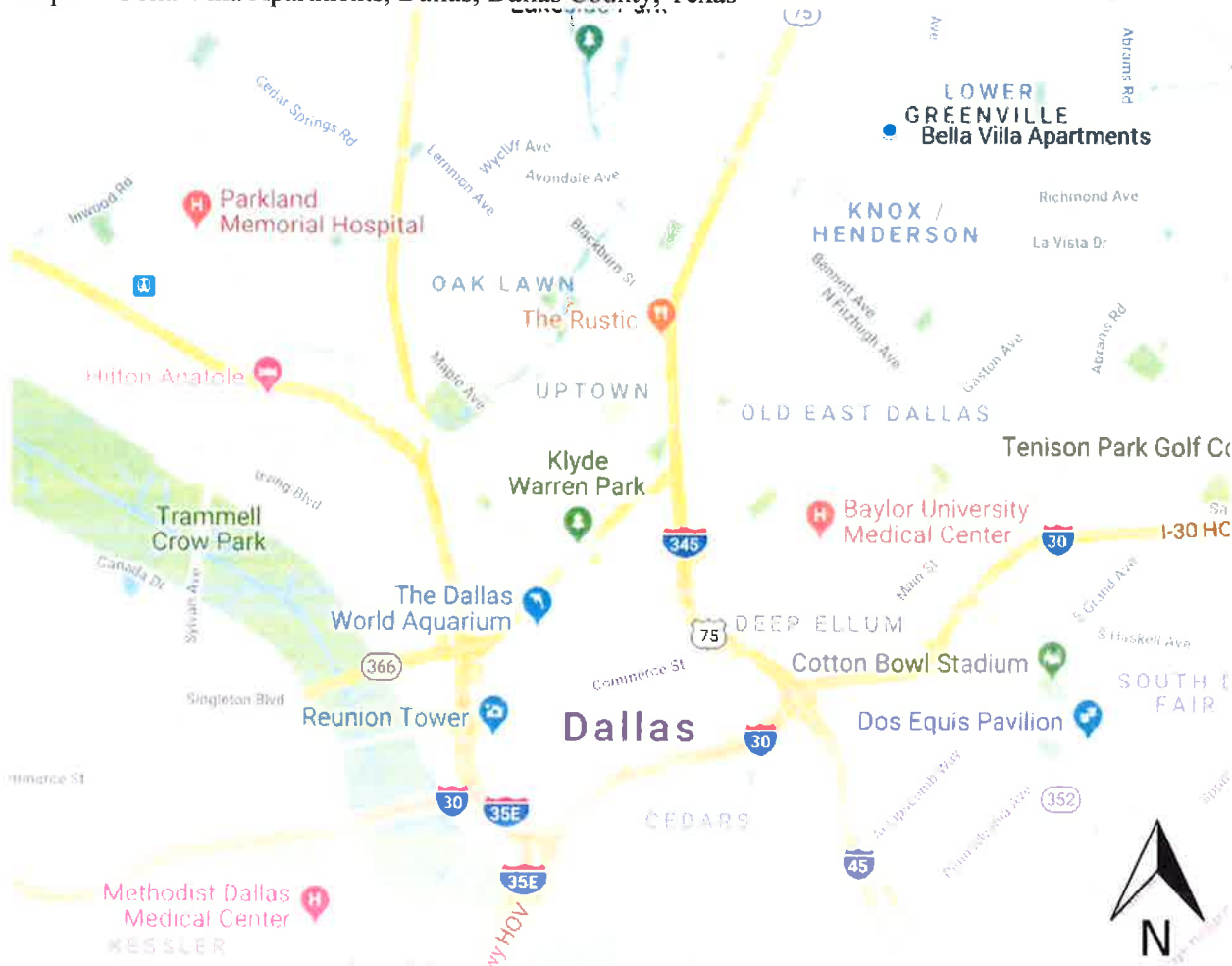
Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Maps

Map 1 – Dallas County, Texas

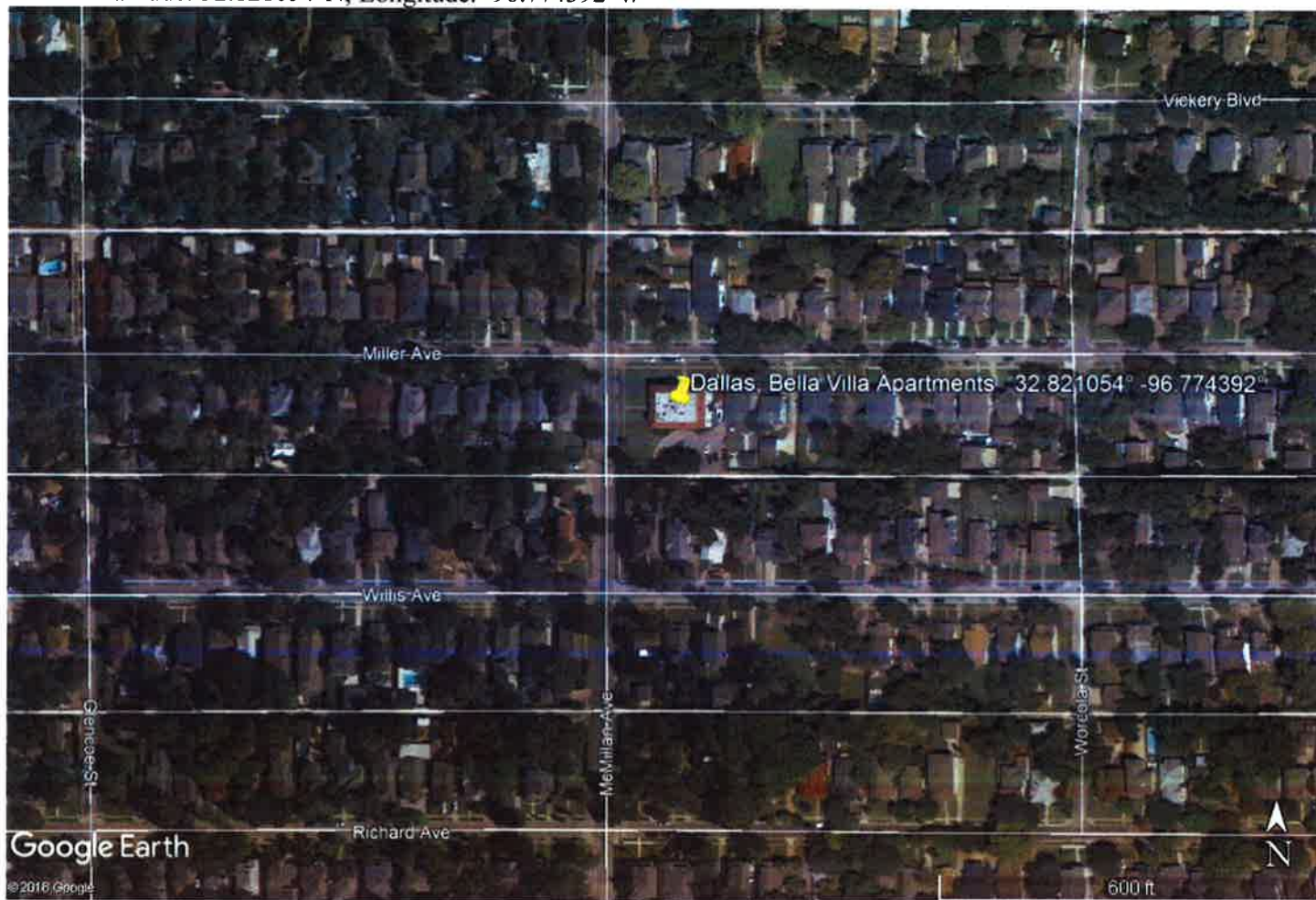


Map 2—Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Map 3 – Google Earth Map, Accessed February 7, 2019  
Latitude: 32.821054°N, Longitude: -96.774392°W





Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Map 4 – Vickery Place Addition (historic boundary) and showing Bella Villa Apartments, Google Earth.



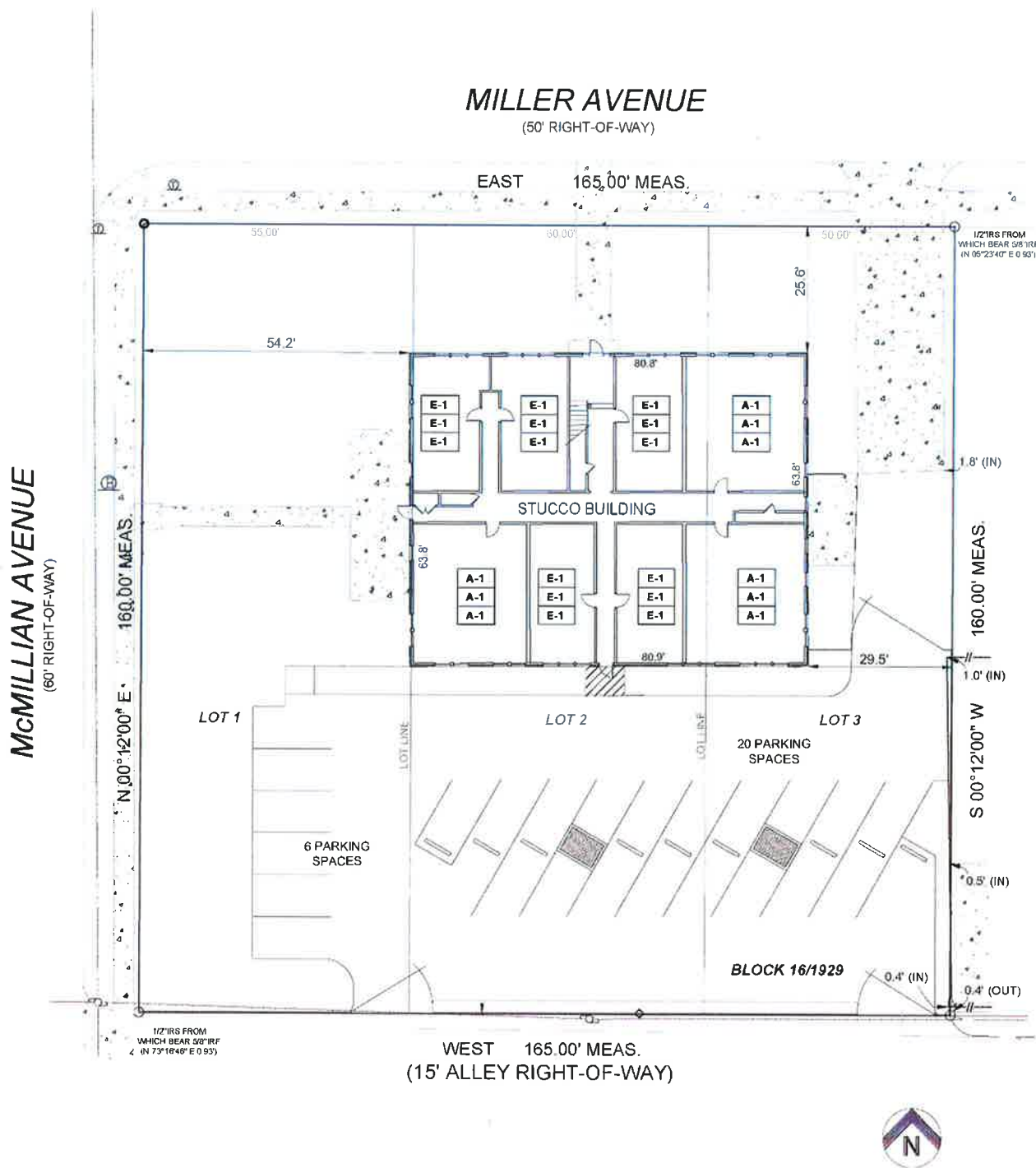
Map 5 – 5506 Miller Avenue. Vickery Place, Block 16/1929, Lots 1, 2 and 3; Dallas, Dallas County, Texas. Dallas CAD. Accessed July 23, 2019.



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

## Figures

Figure 1 – Site Plan



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 2 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map (1922) Volume 3, Page 384

Map depicts the established Vickery Place neighborhood in 1922 with the Vickery Place School in the upper left corner.



Original located at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 3 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Detail (1922) Volume 3, Page 384. Bella Villa Apartments was constructed on the foundation of Vickery Place School.

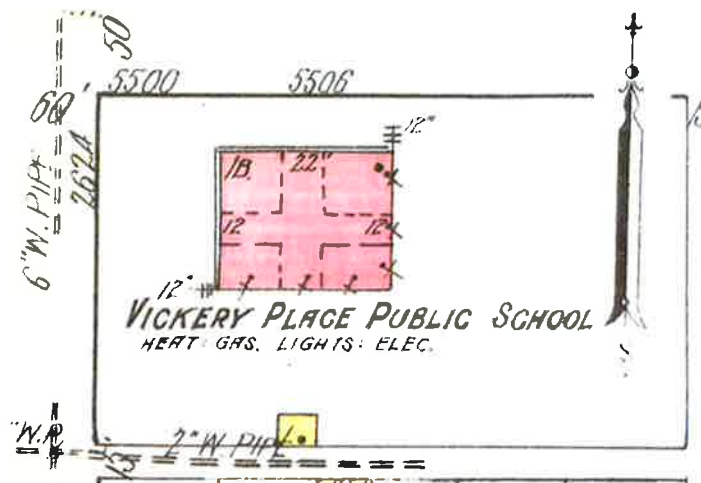
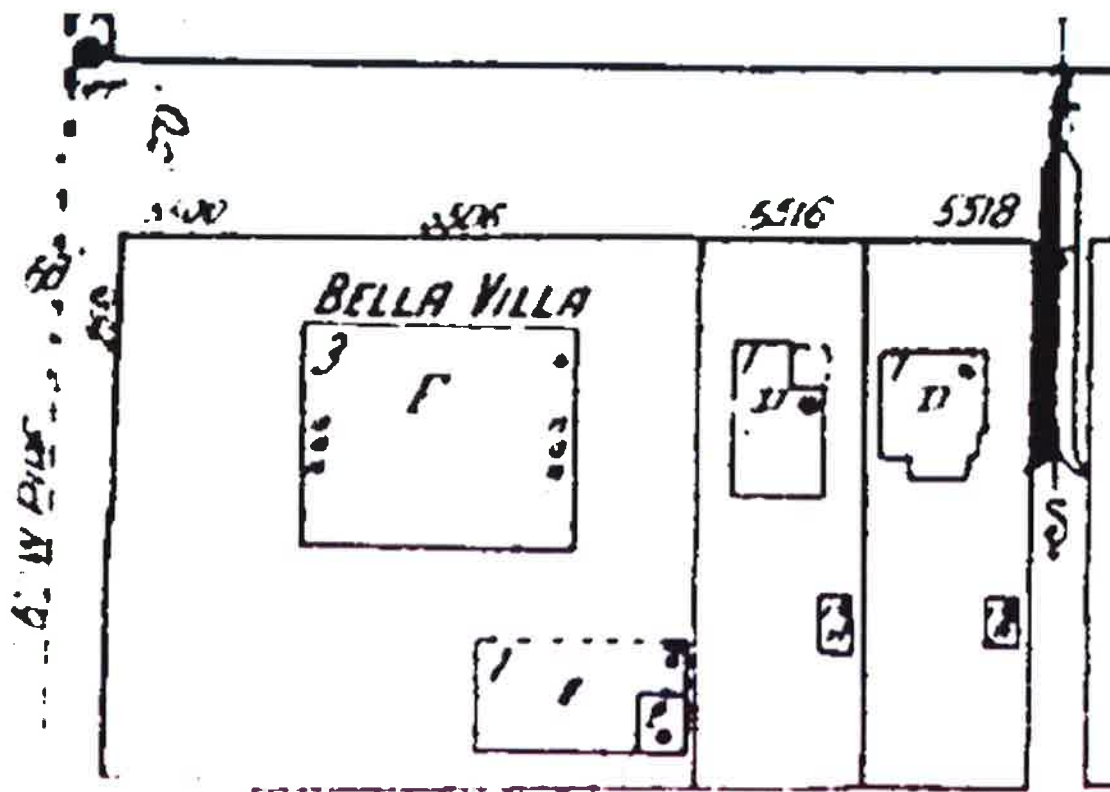


Figure 4 – Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Detail (1952) Volume 3, Page 384 of the Bella Villa Apartments.





Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 5 – Advertisement for the new Vickery Place neighborhood (1911).<sup>52</sup>

# Opening Sale of Lots MONDAY

"ABOVE THE CITY"

## Vickery Place

**Bryan Car  
Car Line Ex-  
tended.  
Now Running  
Through  
Middle of  
the Addition**

**"Above the  
City"  
No Dust  
No Noise  
Clean, Cool  
Comfortable  
Delightful!**

**High  
Elevation  
Artesian Water  
Sewerage  
Macadamized Streets  
Cement Sidewalks  
Terraced Lots  
Building Restrictions**

**Delmar  
Station**

**Belmont  
Station**

**SHERMAN-DALLAS INTERURBAN**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <b>LARGE LOTS</b><br>66x200 Feet to<br>50x144 Feet<br>15-Foot Alleys | <b>LOW PRICES</b><br>\$400<br>to<br>\$1,350 | <b>EASY TERMS</b><br>\$10 Down<br>\$10 Per Month<br>6 Pct Interest |
|--|---|--|

**Approach to the Property**  
Without question, Vickery Place has the prettiest approach of any addition in or around Dallas. The drive is directly out Ross avenue, acknowledged to be the prettiest and best paved residence street in Texas. "A pavement all the way." On the Bryan car you pass only through the best part of town and through the best residence section. Bryan car line is extended through the middle of Vickery Place.

**No Semi-Annual or Annual Interest.**

**T**ODAY WE ANNOUNCE the formal opening of VICKERY PLACE to the people of Dallas and Texas.

Not that the addition is finished, just "in the making," as it were, for we want you to see and appreciate now **WHAT HAS BEEN DONE** and to better understand **WHAT IT WILL BE**.

Its location is ideal, commencing about 1,400 feet beyond St. Mary's College and extending north for nearly a mile. The east front faces Richardson Pike for a half-mile beyond the Caruth home and extends west from the pike to the H. & T. C.

And Vickery Place overlooks the city and country, where most of the best lots are to be found; where you can select a **HOME AND BUILD AND FEEL THAT YOU ARE ON PERMANENT GROUND**.

Why life will be worth living in Vickery Place:

The streets are long and wide, most of them cut to a grade, leaving beautifully terraced lots. Then, too, all streets will be macadamized at once.

A complete sewerage system, with connections for every lot, is to be finished in contract time.

The big artesian well on "the hill," (now finished) will be in operation Sunday and the water mains connected up by the time your home is complete. An abundance of pure water for all.

Four-foot cement sidewalks are to be laid **RIGHT NOW** in front of every lot, affording **"A SIDEWALK TO AND FROM YOUR HOME, ALL THE WAY."**

In short, Vickery Place will be modern, up-to-date.

IT IS **ABSOLUTELY THE MOST CONVENIENT, MOST DESIRABLE AND MOST REASONABLE** place for you to buy if you desire to own your own home.

**SALESMEN WILL BE ON THE GROUND TODAY TO SHOW PROPERTY TO THOSE UNABLE TO VISIT VICKERY PLACE DURING WEEK. NO SALES ON SUNDAY—RESERVATIONS ONLY. SALE DAY, MONDAY.**

# Works-Coleman Land Company

**GEORGE W. WORKS, Sales Agent**  
104 GUARANTY BANK BUILDING  
Phone Main 1420 or North 1454 for further information about the Property

Phone the Office for Automobile Engagement to Visit Vickery Place—Any Time

**OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS OF THE COMPANY**  
H. VICKERY, Fort Worth, President  
O. C. GOSWORTHY, Dallas, Treasurer  
J. A. GOSWORTHY, Dallas, Secretary  
J. B. COLEMAN, Waco, Vice President  
G. W. WORKS, Dallas, Secretary and Manager  
J. B. LAMMEY, Fort Worth

<sup>52</sup> Dallas Morning News, 25 Jun. 1911, Final Edition, 37.



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 6 – Senator Robert Warren announces plans to construct two Orlopp & Orlopp-designed apartment houses in Dallas (1919).<sup>53</sup>

## TWO MORE APARTMENT HOUSES TO BE BUILT

**SENATOR ROBERT L. WARREN OF  
TERRELL INTERESTED IN  
BOTH PROJECTS.**

Of heightened interest in the face of the housing shortage in Dallas is the announcement of real estate deals that will mean two more apartment houses for the city. The first transaction involves the erection of an apartment house on the northwest corner of the intersection of Cole and Lemmon avenues by

former State Senator Robert L. Warren of Terrell, who bought the site last week. Mr. Warren is building a costly home in Highland Park and will move to Dallas as soon as it is completed.

Plans for the apartment house at Cole and Lemmon have been completed by Orlopp & Orlopp. Don C. Orlopp outlined them briefly as follows:

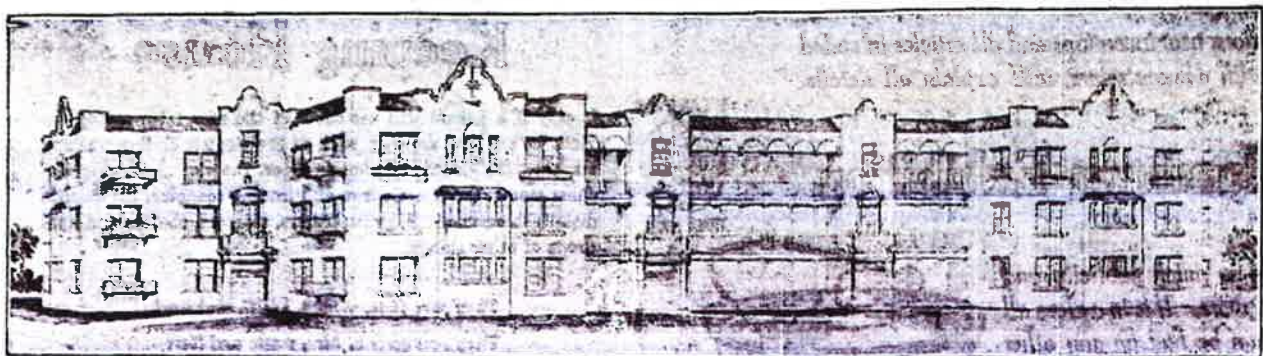
"The building will be three stories high, facing on the Lemmon avenue side of the property, which has a frontage of 275 feet, and it will contain twenty-four apartments of five and six rooms. The cost will be between \$125,000 and \$150,000. The building will be of Spanish architecture, finished either in solid brick or hollow tile. It will be patterned after a combination of the styles of modern New York and California apartments, designed to suit Dallas' climate.

"The two-story house now occupying the lot will be moved down Cole avenue and remodeled so that it can be converted into a boarding house, as an adjunct for the occupants of the apartment house, thus eliminating to some extent the servant problem for the tenants. In the rear of the apartment house a garage to house twenty-five cars will be created. The back yard will be laid out as a courtyard with fences, flower beds and other attractive features. Work is to begin within thirty days, according to present plans."

An apartment house or family hotel is to be erected as a result of the second real estate transaction, by which Senator Warren and J. H. Power purchased Monday from J. B. Wilson his home, occupying 370 feet on Peak street, 354 on Gaston avenue and 219 feet on Junius street. The consideration was \$45,000. The building on the property will be moved to the extra ground on Gaston avenue, leaving a lot 219x370 feet for the apartment house. While plans for this building have not been completed by Orlopp & Orlopp, it is understood that the cost of the building will be in excess of the other apartment in which Senator Warren is interested. Work on the building is expected to begin about Jan. 1, 1920.

Figure 7 - Apartment House for Robert L Warren in Oak Lawn (1919).<sup>54</sup>

**APARTMENT HOUSE TO BE ERECTED AT COLE AND  
LEMMON AVENUES BY ROBERT L. WARREN OF TERRELL**



DESIGN BY ARCHITECTS ORLOPP & ORLOPP OF 275-FOOT FRONT \$150,000 BUILDING WITH TWENTY-FOUR APARTMENTS.

<sup>53</sup> "Two More Apartment Houses to be Built." *Dallas Morning News*, Nov 5, 1919, Final Edition, 13.

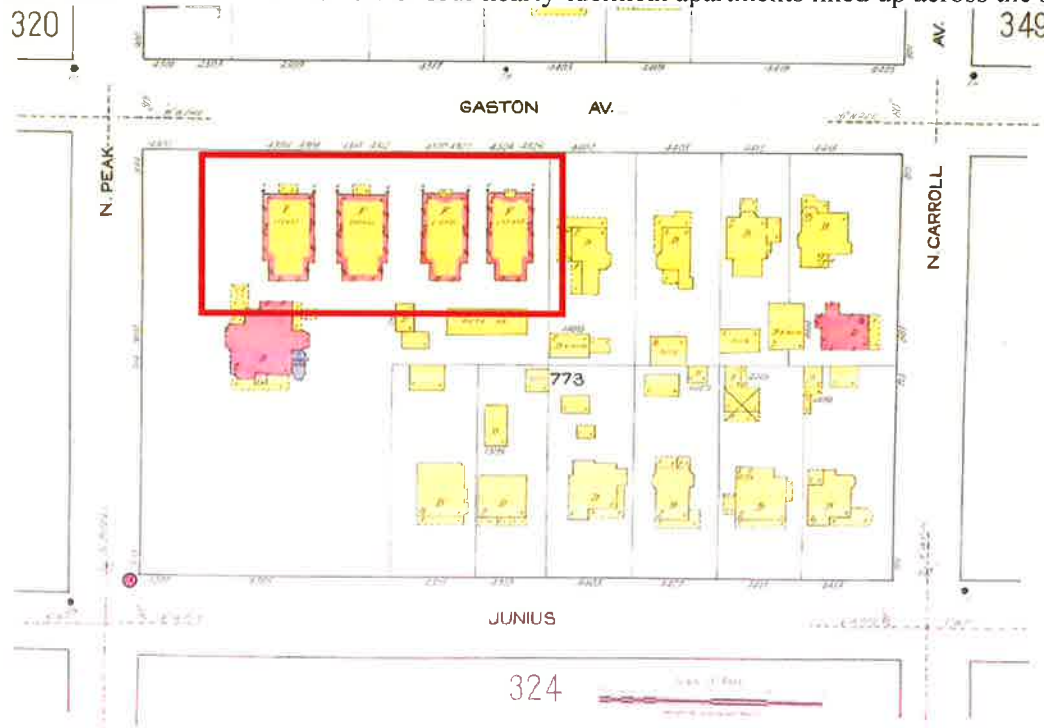
<sup>54</sup> "Apartment House to be Erected at Cole and Lemon Avenues by Robert L. Warren of Terrel." *Dallas Morning News*, Nov 9, 1919, Final Edition, Part 1, 6.

Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 8 - Architect F. J Woerner's 1920 efficiency apartment building at 917 Haskell (Architexas 2019)



Figure 9 – This 1922 Sanborn Map depicts new apartments near the corner of Peak and Gaston Streets. The Guidera Courts are at center left with a neat row of four nearly-identical apartments lined up across the street.



Original located at the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Figure 10 - Guidera Courts (1920c) northeast corner Gaston at Peak (Architexas 2019)



Figure 13 – Twin 1929 apartment blocks at 901-907 N. Bishop, in Oak Cliff. (Architexas 2019)



Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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**Photographs**

Bella Villa Apartments

Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

Photographer: Jay Firsching - Architexas

Date: 5/12/2018

Photo 0001 – North elevation, looking south.





Bella Villa Apartments, Dallas, Dallas County, Texas

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Photo 0002 – West elevation, looking east.



Photo 0003 – South elevation, looking northeast.



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Photo 0004 – Southeast oblique, looking northwest.



Photo 0005 – East elevation, cornice, and window detail.





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Photo 0006 --Detail of main entry on Miller Avenue.





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Photo 0007 –First floor primary lobby stair, camera facing southeast.



Photo 0008 – First floor primary hallway, camera facing south. Hardwood floors are original.



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Photo 0009 – First floor apartment, typical, camera facing southeast. Arched entries are a characteristic to the building interior.



Photo 0010 – Third floor apartment, typical, camera facing south.



~end~